New Nouveau Brunswick CANADA

News Release

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NB Human Rights Commission

Human Rights Commission works to prevent discrimination in the workplace (07/05/09)

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FREDERICTON (CNB) - In response to media reports of allegations of discrimination against women in the workplace, the Human Rights Commission reminds New Brunswickers who believe that they have been discriminated against that they can file a complaint with the commission.

"Regrettably, the commission still receives complaints alleging sex discrimination in employment," said Dr. Gordon L. Porter, chair of the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission. "Fortunately, our complaint statistics suggest that this type of discrimination has decreased."

In 2005-06, 30 complaints of sex discrimination in the workplace were filed with the commission. They represented 13 per cent of the employment-related complaints, a drop from an average 26 per cent during the 1990s, for example.

"The commission's work goes beyond remedying discrimination after the fact," Porter said. "We also assist people to prevent discrimination in the first place. For example, we publish several guidelines that provide guidance about how to avoid discrimination in specific situations.

"In addition, the commission promotes the benefits of human rights best practices like harassment-free workplaces, accommodation of disabilities and diverse workforces. These benefits also extend to schools and communities. For example, the commission will be working increasingly to assist communities to be welcoming places for immigrants."

The Human Rights Commission administers the *Human Rights Act*, which applies to employers, service providers, property owners, governments and certain organizations.

The act prohibits discrimination and harassment based on: race, colour, religion, national origin, ancestry, place of origin, age, physical disability, mental disability, marital status, sexual orientation, sex, social condition, and political belief or activity.

Anyone who believes that they have been discriminated against based on these 14 grounds can file a human rights complaint. There is a one-year deadline, but it can be extended in certain cases. It does not cost anything to file a complaint.

The Human Rights Commission will investigate and/or conciliate the complaint impartially. If a complaint cannot be settled, a human rights Board of Inquiry can be appointed to hear the evidence and

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issue various remedies if the discrimination is proven.

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MEDIA CONTACT: Francis Young, N.B. Human Rights Commission, 506-453-2308 or 1-888- 471-2233; http://www.gnb.ca/hrc-cdp/e/index.htm.

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